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NEW JERSEY COLLEGES:

CAMPUS on the BOULEVARD

*St. Peter's College on Jersey City's
Main Thoroughfare Reaping Benefits of
an Excellent Scholastic Reputation a
Quarter-Century After Reopening Doors
Closed by World War I Student Shortage*

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

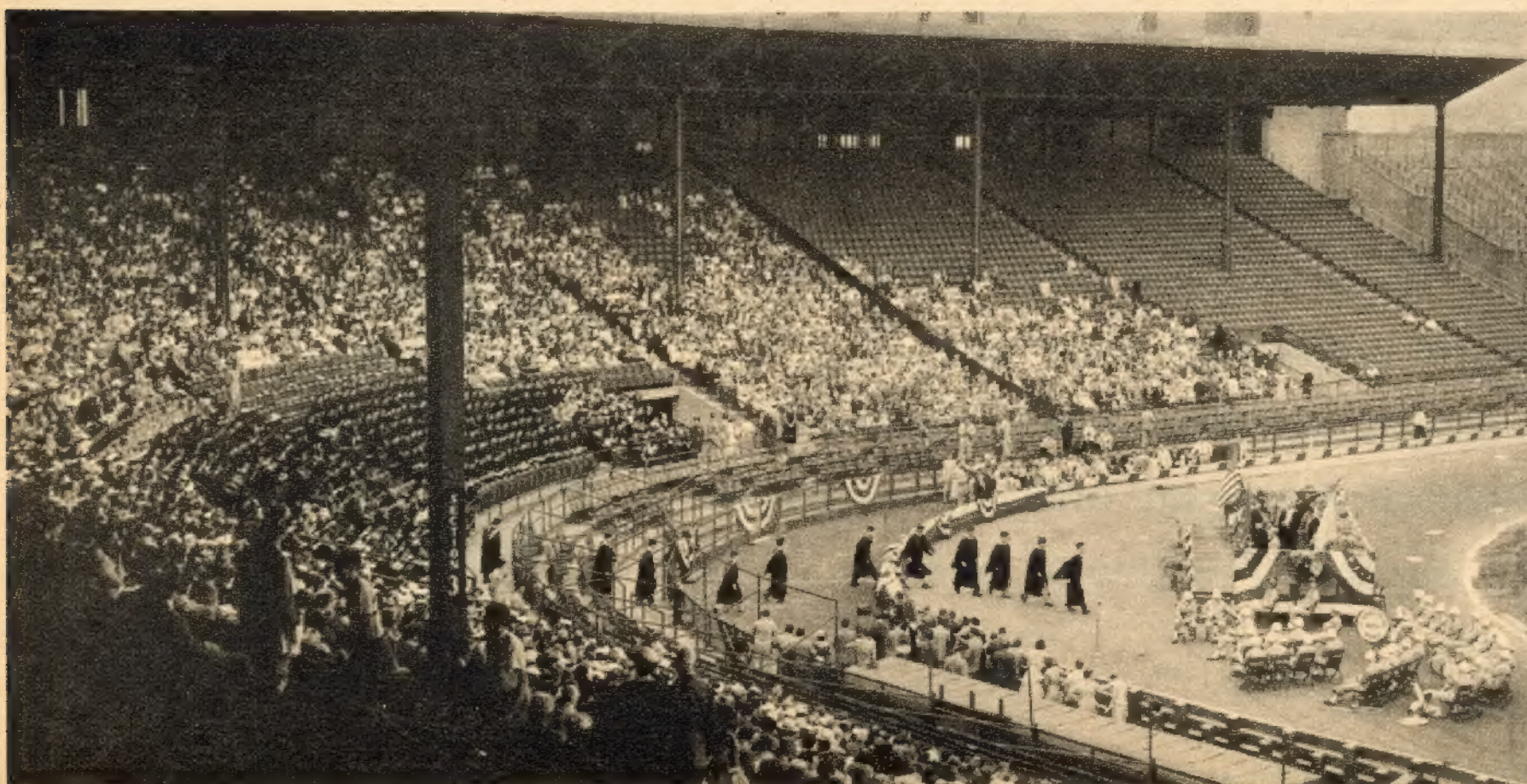
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St. Peter's ROTC Band, parading on Montgomery St., stops Hudson Blvd. traffic. **BELOW:** Commencement

Day exercises at nearby Roosevelt Stadium, made necessary by large size of recent graduating classes.



THE peacock lends his brilliant plumage to St. Peter's College on the heights of Jersey City. His blue is the blue of the college colors, his name is the name of the athletic teams, his very image is emblazoned on the college seal. However, this peacock of St. Peter's symbolizes not puffing pride, but resurrection on the shores of the Hudson River.

St. Peter's College rose from the dead, just as the peacock in mythology committed itself to the flames of a funeral pyre, then rose reborn. St. Peter's died in the flames of World War I, only to regain life in 1930, handsomer and stronger than ever. At that revival the peacock went into the official college seal and into the spirit of the college.

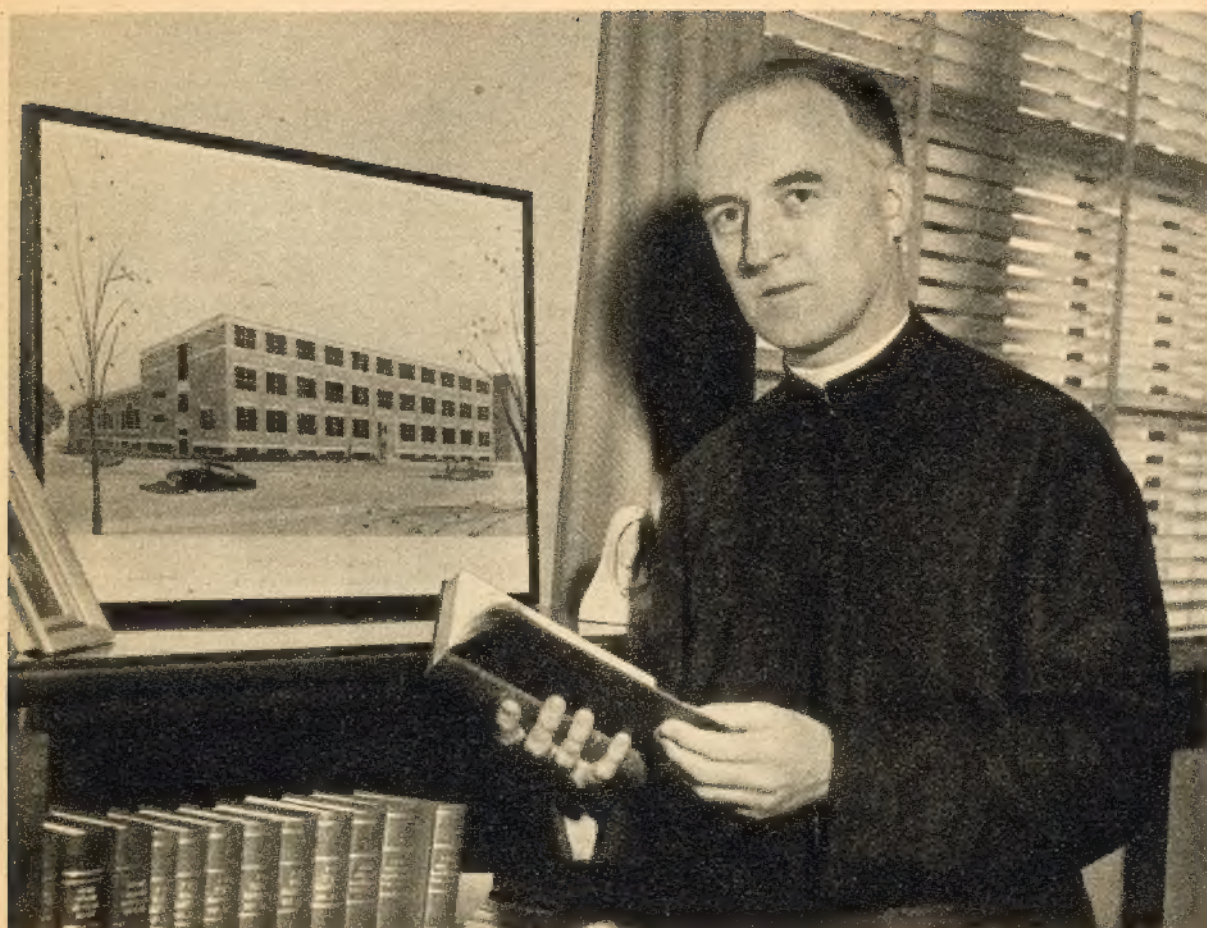
Rev. Robert I. Gannon, a noted Jesuit educator who later became president of Fordham University, chose the peacock symbol in 1930. Then dean of St. Peter's College, Father Gannon recognized that the peacock not only signified invincibility but also paid tribute to the original name of Jersey City—Pauwonia, the Dutch equivalent of the Latin Pavonia, "The Land of the Peacock." The "Pauw," in turn, derived from Lord Pauw, Dutch burgoemeister who once owned all of what is now Jersey City.

St. Peter's College today stretches along one block of Hudson Blvd., on the hill well above the waterfront where Jersey City began. St. Peter's began down there on those flats, too; died there, and was revived there. Not until 1936 did the college reach the heights, but on its present summit the future of St. Peter's will be shaped.

NO pretensions of greatness through bigness have ever stirred the Jesuits, in Jersey City or in any of their 28 colleges in the United States. St. Peter's now has an enrollment of 1,250 day students and looks to 1,600 as its maximum day enrollment. Even com-

This is the 19th of a series of articles which not only describe New Jersey's colleges and universities, but tell the story of the growth and traditions of individual colleges within the state, picture their roles in modern education and explain how they plan to meet what has been called "an impending tide of students."

Next Sunday: Newark College of Engineering.



Rev. James J. Shanahan, S.J., college president since 1949, in library. Framed picture is architect's drawing of new Dinneen Hall.

pletion of Dinneen Hall, a new classroom building for which ground was broken in February, won't permit expansion beyond the 1,600 figure. That's perfectly agreeable to Rev. James J. Shanahan, president of the college since 1949.

"We aren't thinking of expanding; that indicates a sudden spreading out," says Father Shanahan. "We are thinking of growth, since that implies orderly and balanced change."

Father Shanahan recognizes that a college with 1,600 students is no longer a "small" institution, at least not in the sense of the smallness the college knew not long ago. Still, at the 1,600 level, Father Shanahan believes St. Peter's can continue its emphasis on the individual. That, in the long run, is a basic tenet of a Jesuit education.

Nevertheless, St. Peter's recognizes that duty to the area the college serves may necessitate higher enrollments in the coming years. Father Shanahan hopes most such growth can be channeled through the college's evening school, where some 400 young men and women now pursue five-year courses leading to B.S. degrees. St. Peter's thinks it soon may triple that evening enrollment to 1,200 students and may some day have as many after-dark students as day students.

SERVICE to the Jersey City and Hudson County area always has been a foremost concern of the college. Jesuit fathers came to Jersey City in 1871 in response to an urgent invitation that they found a college in the city. St. Peter's Church extended the invitation and backed it up by giving the Jesuits a new church and six other buildings.

No one could accuse the Jesuit fathers of precipitate haste; they secured a state charter for St. Peter's College in 1872 but did not admit the first students until 1878. The first class didn't graduate until 1889, and not until 1904 was a clear distinction

made between the high school and the college—both in the same building and both under the same administration.

St. Peter's College wanted a select and limited enrollment, and succeeded in that dedication, since the total number of students seldom rose above 90. The education was in the strictest classical traditions—first year was not freshman year, but "poetry" year; second year was "rhetoric," and third and fourth years were "philosophy" years. The time-honored intellectual atmosphere of Rome and Athens permeated the classrooms.

World War I dealt a knockout blow. All the Jesuit teachers became Army chaplains and most undergraduates followed their faculty into uniform. A class of 23 received degrees in 1917 and a small class continued informal studies the following year to graduation in 1918. The college then closed its doors, presumably forever, leaving behind on the scroll of cultural advance the names of only 237 men with St. Peter's degrees.

ARCHBISHOP Thomas J. Walsh of Newark, whose leadership eventually transformed Seton Hall from a tiny college into a widespread university, breathed revival into the long dormant college on the Hudson. He directed the Jesuits in 1928 to apply for permission to reopen the college and promised full support. That support took him personally all the way to Rome, to help convince the superior general of the Jesuit Order of the need for a Catholic college in Jersey City.

St. Peter's new life was supported by the full strength of the Jesuits. Scholars hailed the quality of the faculty, recruited from among the best minds in Jesuit colleges throughout the country. A Jersey City newspaper, using the language of the sports page, termed the noted teaching staff "The Million-Dollar Faculty"—and the paper wasn't at all wrong.



Focal point of college activities is McDermott Hall, completed in 1950. It contains library, classrooms, administrative offices and consultation rooms. **BELOW:** Senior Walter Connolly of Woodside, L. I., with mounted "Peter Peacock I," symbol of college's revival.



Perhaps no time for a revival could have been less auspicious. Prosperity rode high when Bishop Walsh urged reopening, but by 1930 the nation plunged deeply into the gloom of a rapidly deteriorating economy. With its "million-dollar faculty" and a faith far transcending material possessions, St. Peter's called for students. Eighty-five responded the first year and attended classes in six rented rooms in the downtown Chamber of Commerce building.

Rev. Joseph S. Dinneen, president, and Father Gannon, dean, knew St. Peter's needed better surroundings if

ever the peacock in the college seal was to sprout a brilliant plumage. They found the surroundings on the Boulevard, on the former E. F. C. Young estate—2½ acres of what for Jersey City was wide open charm. The site offered room to expand, a good neighborhood and closeness to excellent transportation.

ST. PETER'S bought the land in 1933, began to build in 1934—not a classroom as might be expected, but an auditorium-gymnasium. Logic dictated that; St. Peter's needed a place where

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ST. PETER'S COLLEGE

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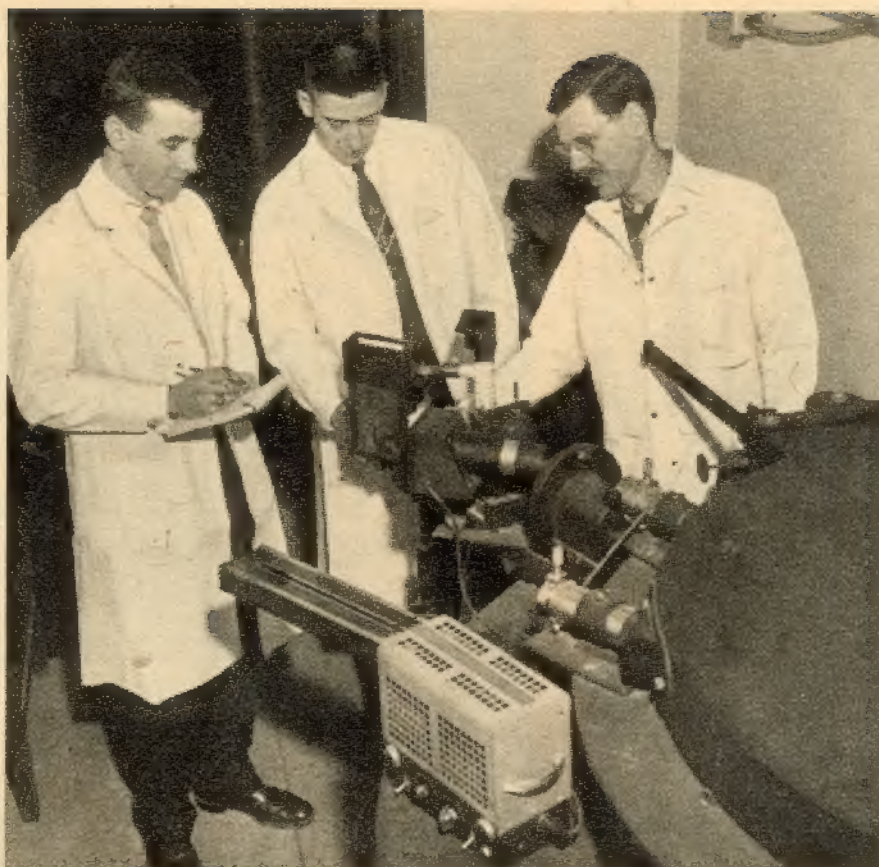
it could gather large audiences to tell its story and a hall where it could hold money-raising parties. A "give a dollar for a brick" campaign pushed rapidly ahead.

Enough dollars came in to provide bricks for four-story Gannon Hall, where the laboratories and lecture rooms for biology, chemistry and physics are lodged. Nearby, the college built a long, low "temporary" building (still on campus as the "Arts Building") for classes in the humanities. Up on the hill, up to its modest campus, St. Peter's came to dwell in 1936.

Significantly, however, even before the move from its upstairs rooms in downtown Jersey City, St. Peter's had reason to be as proud as academic peacocks go, because in 1935 the uncompromising Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools gave its stamp of approval to the college's scholastic achievements. No one could confuse St. Peter's rented rooms with an Ivy League campus, but the college nonetheless flew where birds of high academic feather flocked together.

A student body of about 400 day students and 200 evening students moved to the Boulevard campus. Students, with knowledge of what had happened in World War I, hopefully sang to their alma mater that neither "war, nor time has power to bind thee." World War II tried, but didn't quite succeed—even though the enrollment dipped to fewer than 50 day students at one point, and only nine men received degrees in 1945.

St. Peter's proved its elasticity in the surge of veteran students after V-J Day. At the peak of the GI pressure the college enrollment soared to 1,400 day students, more than triple the prewar student body. In 1950 alone St. Peter's granted 384 degrees, about equal to the average overall college enrollment a decade before. These days, with 1,250 daytime undergraduates, St. Peter's has gone far be-



Dr. Thomas Dodd (right), professor of chemistry, instructs students in spectrograph use.

yond the responsibilities it assumed in 1930.

THERE have been some changes on the Boulevard campus, of course, since 1936. Memorial Hall, a long, one-story building finished in 1947, extends westward from Collins Gymnasium and is now used principally for the ROTC program. Gannon Hall's laboratory facilities have been brought into full use through minor modifications—minor because the Jesuits who planned the building recognized that greater laboratory space would one day be necessary, and installed hoods and gas and electric outlets suitable for laboratory use when needed.

Principal physical change at St. Peter's has been the construction of McDermott Hall, finished in 1950. The three-story brick building contains the library, many classrooms of varying sizes and administrative offices and consultation rooms for the intensive counseling program carried on by the college. The first-floor foyer, where the two wings of the L-shaped building join, is the focal point of the col-

lege. Through this foyer, on the way to classes or the library, students cross and recross the large colored peacock on the college seal imbedded in the floor.

But the peacock as a hallmark of student life comes principally alive in the Arts Building, due to be demolished after all these years to make way for Dinneen Hall. Last June the college yearbook mourned "Arts" passing: "This dwelling, temporary in nature but permanent in memory, embraced the joys and heartaches of numerous students who passed down her railroad hall. . . . Now, upon departure, we recognize her worth."

The "railroad hall" embodies much of what St. Peter's has meant to thousands of young men since 1936. Just inside the front entrance the bulletin boards mirror the joys and sorrows and ambitions and heartaches of studentdom—notes of dances, reports of athletic victories or defeats, announcements of scholarship opportunities and the emotion-filled lists of examination grades.

At the far end of the hall the student's spiritual life centers in the Gannon Hall Chapel, reached by a linking corridor. At that end of the Arts Building, too, the physical man is fed in the cafeteria on the side of the hall opposite the chapel. Steps beyond the chapel and the cafeteria lead down to the gymnasium and the home of St. Peter's blue and white Peacocks.

THE basketball Peacocks and their followers have outgrown the gymnasium except for rare occasions, since nearly all home games are played at the nearby Jersey City Armory. These days St. Peter's marching song echoes through the Armory: "Behold the Peacock, parading along, serene, majestic and tall; Come swell, Petreans, our rousing song, arise and follow his call." The Peacocks have responded well in recent years, time after time frightening the "big" basketball powers of the metropolitan area.

Basketball gets most of the headlines but the Peacocks also strut var-



Bulletin board in "railroad hall" of soon-to-be-razed Arts Building is center of attraction.

sity teams in baseball, tennis, bowling, track, swimming and golf. Athletics, like all student activities, are encouraged at St. Peter's—where such activities are not "extra" curricular or "after class" but "co-curricular," meaning they are looked upon as an integral part of a man's education. Indeed, in the 1930s when the student body was small, graduation requirements called for four credits in activities above and beyond the classroom.

Such a graduation requirement is not practical in a student body of 1,200, but the college creates opportunity for co-curricula participation by sponsoring more than 25 separate activities. To say that the Peacock sings in Arts Hall, where most of these activities center, is not stretching a point.

Consider how the noble bird lends his name to student life: The yearbook is the "Peacock Pie"; the dramatic society is "Argus Eyes" (for the eyes in the bird's tail); the student paper is the Pauw-Wow (for Lord Pauw, whose land became Pauwonia or "Peacock Land"); the literary magazine is the "Pavan" (from Pavonia). Even the highest scholastic award a student can win pays tribute: Most Noble Order of the Peacock. To continue the personification, once Peter Peacock I and later Peter II strutted as live college mascots, but Peter I proved not immortal and is now stuffed. Peter II's shrill mating calls forced his removal to less settled regions.

CO-CURRICULAR activities are top-flight. Two examples illustrate how St. Peter's student activities compare with those of other colleges. Argus Eyes has won in drama competition among Eastern Jesuit colleges (including Fordham, Holy Cross, etc.) three of the past four years. The Gannon Debating Society engages in as many as 50 debates in a season. St. Peter's debaters won the Hall of Fame tourney in 1953, took the first annual Harvard tournament in 1955, have won numerous other trophies, and in the past few years have defeated



Energetic G. Marston Haddock rehearsing portion of "Peacock Chorale," principal St. Peter's evening college co-curricular activity.

visiting debaters from both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Such attention to excellence in student activity stems from the intensity of the academic program at St. Peter's, where high scholarship is an ever-calling goal. The college retains its traditional liberal arts curriculum although in recent years the school of business administration has won increasing favor among students. About half of all graduates now earn their degrees in the area of commerce.

Science is vital on the Jersey City campus. St. Peter's always has required science courses but now 350 students are taking one or more courses in chemistry, an unusually heavy concentration in a liberal arts college. Of this number, only about 18 or 20 men graduate each year as chemistry majors, although many more take enough chemistry as a minor subject to enable them to work in New Jersey's billion-dollar chemical industry after graduation.

Much of the present science demand stems from the college's exacting pre-medical and pre-dental programs. This year 61 students are enrolled in the program, more than ever. A 1955 survey revealed the high effectiveness of the program; with only 21 graduating classes since 1934, St. Peter's in 1955 had 221 doctors and dentists among its alumni—exceptional for so young a liberal arts college.

HOWEVER important science or business administration have gotten at St. Peter's, every student must take 24 credits in philosophy and 12 credits in theology before graduating. Non-catholics (about six per cent of the enrollment) are not required to take theology courses, but every student, regardless of religion, must pursue an average of one full course in philosophy every semester.

Study of philosophy leads every student at some time in his junior or senior years to "The Orals," the 15-minute session of philosophical questioning which is a long required phase of a Jesuit education. Each student is given a list of philosophical topics

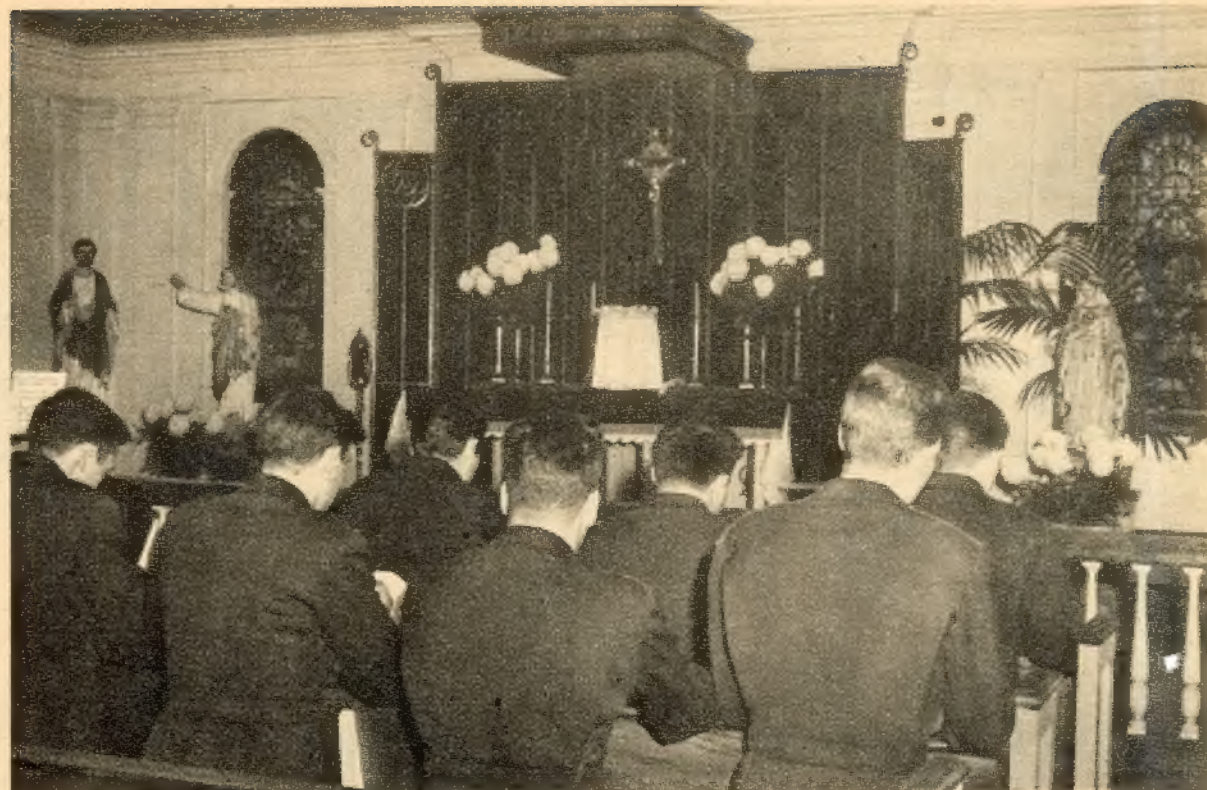
he may be called on to discuss, and then he is quizzed by two members of the faculty. Like most tests of this sort, "The Orals" are a source of great trepidation in advance and a source of great pride when successfully met.

Father Shanahan believes that such emphasis on philosophy is vital. "I believe that a man with sound philosophical training knows how to think; he won't be thrown off his feet in any discussion," the president says. "We believe in giving a man an intellectual grasp of the Catholic outlook on life, in instilling a sense of good citizenship, and in giving him a knowledge of how to think clearly and how to express his thoughts."

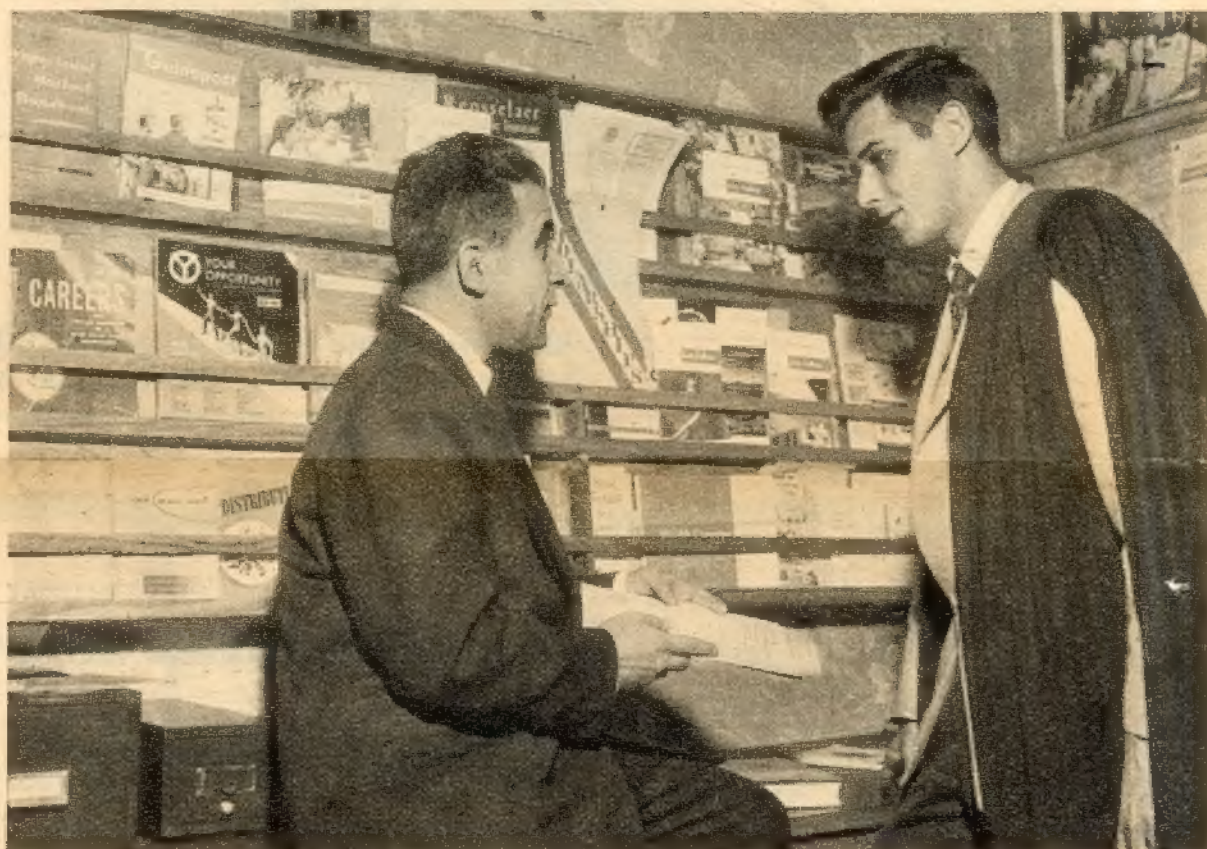
Scholastic emphasis at St. Peter's has paid dividends for graduates. Many go on to graduate schools—47 per cent, well above the American college average. The unusual number of St. Peter's graduates who have become doctors or dentists can be cited as an example of good academic preparation. In addition, 34 members of the Class of 1955 won graduate scholarships; in the last three years, St. Peter's men have won five Fulbright awards, and a member of the Class of 1956 has won a Rhodes Scholarship. These are tangible proofs of a good education.

HOW is such a scholastic reputation achieved? St. Peter's believes it comes in part because the college draws its students in the main from metropolitan area Jesuit high schools, where stress is on academic achievement and preparation for college. It comes in part too, Father Shanahan says, because of the high percentage of Jesuit fathers on the faculty (34 out of 114 faculty members are Jesuits).

Jesuit education emphasizes the importance of the individual, and one of the most impressive facets of St. Peter's College is the program of counseling and guidance started in 1949. Eight men (four Jesuits, four laymen) work full time in these areas and the college has developed a comprehensive program of testing and interviewing. Students are urged to



ROTC members meditating in chapel of Gannon Hall, spiritual life center. **BELOW:** Counseling and guidance program in action shows Dr. Angelo Danesino (left), chairman of graduate scholarship committee, and student Edward Flynn of Maywood, in senior's gown.



discuss their problems, personal or academic, with the counseling and guidance personnel.

The close faculty-student relationship goes beyond a formal academic or guidance program. Warm spring weather lures both students and faculty members outside to sit on the steps of McDermott Hall or on benches near the Arts Building to discuss and debate everything from science and religion to baseball. Whether the St. Peter's education teaches a student to think in these informal exchanges an outsider can't tell; only the student on one end of the bench and the Jesuit father on the other end know for sure.

THOSE benches will be swept away in the building of Dinneen Hall. Down will come the Arts Building. Of course the need for Dinneen Hall will still any misgivings about the loss of campus landmarks. The new \$750,000 building will create classroom space and will give the college a modern dining hall, a large modern auditorium and an up-to-the-minute modern language laboratory.

Future building requirements in-

clude a new house for the Jesuit faculty, a new library building, and some day a field house for athletics and ROTC programs. The new Jesuit house is important: if such a house could be made available, more Jesuit fathers would be sent to Jersey City. Future growth of St. Peter's is as much attuned to getting more Jesuits as it is to getting new classrooms.

The value of Jesuit teachers is best measured in terms of educational excellence, of course. Still, there also is a more mundane side. The Jesuits are not paid for teaching but what they would be paid if they were lay faculty members must be thought of as "contributed income," used to keep tuition costs down. That is a principal reason why a St. Peter's education costs a man only about \$500 annually for tuition and all fees.

Thus, reborn and flown to new heights, St. Peter's stands firmly on the heights. Its 3,000 graduates since 1934 are proof of the value of the resurrection in Jersey City, proof that in a college, as in mythology, the peacock that lives again is stronger and more vital than in his pre-pyre days.



Campus benches provide forum for students who discuss everything from baseball to science and for informal meetings with faculty.